



For Immediate Release  
November 1, 2007

Contact: Carol Guthrie  
202-224-4515

## **BAUCUS SPEAKS ON CHILDREN'S HEALTH INSURANCE PROGRAM**

*Finance Chairman disappointed by hasty vote, intends to keep working for  
consensus*

**Washington, DC** – Senate Finance Committee Chairman Max Baucus (D-Mont.) spoke on the Senate floor today regarding the future of the Children's Health Insurance Program. The Senate is voting this afternoon on updated legislation to renew and improve CHIP, which provides health coverage to children whose parents do not qualify for Medicaid, but cannot afford private insurance. The President has promised to veto the bill under consideration by the Senate today. Sufficient time was not allowed for Baucus and a bipartisan group of Senate colleagues to amend the bill to assure that it could become law. However, meetings among Senate and House negotiators continued this afternoon, and Baucus reiterated his commitment to striking a strong CHIP agreement soon.

### **Floor Remarks by Senator Max Baucus (D-Mont.) on the Future of the Children's Health Insurance Program (as prepared)**

In 1997, Congress enacted the Children's Health Insurance Program. From the beginning, it has been about kids. It has been about trying to give the parents of low-income, working families the peace of mind that comes from knowing that health care is there for their children.

That's all this is. It is about health care for kids. These are kids in working families. These are kids who, through no fault of their own, were born into families who have a hard time buying medical insurance in America. We're trying to help these kids.

A large number of Senators from both sides of the aisle have worked together to try to reach consensus. Senator Grassley, Senator Rockefeller, Senator Hatch, and I met together and worked things out. And when the House failed to muster enough votes to override the President's veto, we worked together with House Republicans. All four of us, Senator Grassley, Senator Rockefeller, Senator Hatch, and I met repeatedly with moderate House Republicans to try to find middle ground.

--more--

We have made progress. I believe that a compromise is within reach. I believe that, given a little more time, Congress could pass a CHIP bill that could achieve the support of more than two-thirds of both Houses of Congress. Unfortunately, today some objected to giving us that time. I regret that.

But we met again with House Republican just at 2:00. We agreed to continue meeting. We will meet again next Tuesday. We will reach an agreement soon. And I don't think that I will be telling tales out of school to say that the Majority Leader visited our meeting. And he said that if we do get a deal, the Senate will take it up.

I regret that the opponents of CHIP — and let us be clear that they truly are fighting not just this bill, but the Children's Health Insurance Program itself — the opponents of CHIP have made it impossible for us to offer an amendment to the bill before us today that would get this done. They have succeeded in stopping us today.

I'm disappointed. I am not discouraged. I am disappointed. But we will keep working. Even if the President once again vetoes health care for kids, we will work to get it done.

And so, we are still left before us with a good bill. Before us today is a bill that addresses many of the concerns that Senators expressed with the first CHIP bill. The bill before us today focuses more on kids. It focuses more on low-income families. It is a good bill.

And so, there is no reason why anyone who supported the first bill on September 27 would not do so again today. And there is every reason why those who objected to the first bill would support this bill today. I urge my Colleagues to join in voting for cloture and then voting for the bill.

I urge them to do so, because this is still about health care for kids, health care for kids in working families. Measures like these are why we came here to work in public service. Measures like these are why the people for whom we work sent us here. Let us not let them down.

###